

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 32 and 33 without prejudice or disclaimer and amend claim 13 as follows.

1. (Previously presented) A plurality of panels, each of said panels comprising:  
a core,  
a decorative upper surface, and  
edges, at least one of said edges comprising a joining element, wherein said joining element is at least one selected from the group consisting of a tongue and a groove for joining the panels,  
wherein predetermined portions of the joining elements comprise at least one tube, said tube being sectioned into a plurality of segments.
2. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 1 wherein the tube comprises an encapsulated agent in at least one of said plurality of segments.
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4. (Previously presented) The panels according to claim 2 wherein the tube is sealed at its ends.
5. (Previously presented) The panels according to claim 2 wherein the encapsulated agent is present in a plurality of said segments.
6. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 1 wherein the encapsulated agent is a glue.
7. (Previously presented) The panels according to claim 6 wherein the joining elements comprise:

a first tube being sectioned into a plurality of segments comprising a first glue component of a two component glue system and

a second tube comprising a second component of the two component glue system.

8. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 7 wherein the tubes are sealed at the ends.

9. (Previously presented) The panels according to claim 7 wherein the second tube is sectioned into a plurality of segments, wherein at least one of said plurality of segments contains said second component.

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11. (Previously presented) The panels according to claim 1, wherein the tube comprises a thermoplastic material, and locally welded section walls, welded at predetermined positions thereby forming the segments.

12. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 5 wherein the tube comprises a thermoplastic material, and locally welded section walls, welded at predetermined positions thereby forming the confined bodies of glue.

13. (Currently Amended) The panels according to claim 8, wherein the tubes are welded from a thermoplastic laminate strip; the long sides of the strip overlapping so that an inside of the strip is welded towards an outside of the opposite long side of the strip thereby forming the tube, the material of the laminate being selected so that the inside is constituted of a first material and the outside is constituted by a second material, wherein the first material has a good bond when welded together with the first material, and wherein a second material has a bond to the first material which is weaker than the bond between two first materials.

14. (Previously presented) The panels according to claim 13 wherein each of said segments comprise an encapsulated agent therein.
15. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 14 wherein said segments are formed in said tube by locally welding the inside of the tube together at predetermined positions.
16. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 14 wherein the tubes comprise a thermoplastic material.
17. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 6 wherein the glue is a PVAC glue.
18. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 6 wherein the glue is a polyurethane glue.
19. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 1 wherein the joining elements are arranged so that a first edge of the panel is provided with a groove while a second edge, arranged parallel to the first edge and opposite thereto, is provided with a tongue.
20. (Previously presented) The panels according to claim 1 wherein the encapsulated agent is present in a recess in the groove.
21. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 1 wherein the encapsulated agent is present in a recess on the tongue.
22. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 21 wherein the recess is arranged on an upper portion of the tongue.

23. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 1 wherein a first portion of the encapsulated agent is arranged in a recess of the groove while a second portion of the encapsulated agent is arranged in a recess on the tongue.

24. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 9 wherein the first tube is arranged in a recess of the groove while the second tube is arranged in a recess on the tongue.

25. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 24 wherein the joining element comprises at least one of a snapping wedge and a recess arranged to position and mechanically lock the panels tightly together while the glue sets.

26. (Previously amended) The panels according to claim 1 wherein a glue is applied on the edges as an emulsion which then is allowed to dry before the joining of the surface elements and that the agent is used for activating the dry glue during assembly.

27. (Previously presented) The panels according to claim 26 wherein said glue is a water-activated glue.

28. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 26 wherein the glue is a water and alcohol mixture-activated glue.

29. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 26 wherein the glue further comprises an expanding agent causing the glue to swell when activated.

30. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 29 wherein the expanding agent is a cellulose derivative.

31. (Previously Presented) The panels according to claim 29 wherein the expanding agent causes the glue to foam.

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34. (Previously Presented) A panel comprising:

a core;

at least one of a tongue and a groove, and

a tube in at least a portion of said groove or on a portion of said tongue, said tube comprising a plurality of segments and seals between said segments and at ends of the tube, a longitudinal bond and a latitudinal bond, wherein said longitudinal bond is weaker than the latitudinal bond.

35. (Previously Presented) The panel of claim 33, wherein said tube is formed from a laminate strip, wherein long sides of said strip overlap, such that an inside of the strip is welded towards an outside of the opposing long side of the strip.